

**Draft
Environmental Assessment**

**Site Protection Improvements
at
Stuart Mill Bay Fishing Access Site
Georgetown Lake, Montana**

June 15, 2004



***Montana Fish,
Wildlife & Parks***

**Site Protection Improvements
Stuart Mill Bay Fishing Access Site
Georgetown Lake, Montana**

**Draft Environmental Assessment
MEPA, NEPA, MCA 23-1-110 CHECKLIST**

(Note that if you are reviewing this document electronically, the appendices are in separate files.)

PART I. PROPOSED ACTION DESCRIPTION

1. **Type of proposed state action:** Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks (MFWP) proposes to widen (to about 22') and gravel about one mile of existing roads; convert about one-third mile of existing road to walking trail; improve gravel boat launch and designate parking at north end of site; improve gravel carry-in launch site and parking for day-use along southeastern edge of site; accommodate existing camping use by designating camp site spurs along main road with level, gravel parking pads, numbered posts, picnic tables, and fire rings; level and gravel one designated host pad (no utilities); install sealed vault latrines to accommodate use; erect signs and an entrance gate to help manage the site; reclaim remaining roads on site.
2. **Agency authority for the proposed action:** The 1977 Montana Legislature enacted statute 87-1-605 MCA, which directs Fish, Wildlife & Parks to acquire, develop and operate a system of fishing accesses. The legislature established an earmarked funding account to ensure that this function would be accomplished. Sections 12-8-213, 23-1-105, 23-1-106, 15-1-122, 61-3-321, and 87-1-303, MCA, authorize the collection of fees and charges for the use of state park system units and fishing access sites, and contain rule-making authority for their use, occupancy and protection. The opportunity for public involvement regarding the proposed park project is provided under MCA 23-1-110.
3. **Name of project:** Site Protection Improvement - Stuart Mill Bay Fishing Access Site
4. **Name, address and phone number of project sponsor (if other than the agency):** Montana Fish, Wildlife, and Parks is the project sponsor.
5. **If applicable:**
Estimated Construction/Commencement Date: August 2004
Estimated Completion Date: Spring 2005
Current Status of Project Design (% complete): 50%

6. **Location affected by proposed action (county, range and township):** The Fishing Access Site (FAS) can be reached by traveling about 13 miles west of Anaconda on State Highway 1; travel about 1.4 miles southwest on Denton's Point County Road to the signed FAS. The FAS is approximately 60-acres, a peninsula at the south end of Georgetown Lake and north of the county road; elevation 6378-6400 feet above sea level. The site is in Deer Lodge County, Montana; Township 5 North, Range 13 West, Section 19 N½.

Please refer to Appendix A-Stuart Mill Bay Location Map and Appendix B-Site Plan.

7. **Project size -- estimate the number of acres that would be directly affected that are currently:**

| | <u>Acres</u> | | <u>Acres</u> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------|--------------------|--------------|
| (a) Developed: | | (d) Floodplain | <u>0</u> |
| Residential | | | |
| Industrial | <u>0</u> | (e) Productive: | |
| (b) Open Space/Woodlands/Recreation | <u>58</u> | Irrigated cropland | <u>0</u> |
| | | Dry cropland | <u>0</u> |
| (c) Wetlands/Riparian Areas | <u>2</u> | Forestry | <u>0</u> |
| | | Rangeland | <u>0</u> |
| | | Other | <u>0</u> |

8. **Listing of any other Local, State or Federal agency that has overlapping or additional jurisdiction.**

- (a) **Permits:** permits would be filed at least 2 weeks prior to project start.

| <u>Agency Name</u> | <u>Permit</u> |
|--|---|
| Deer Lodge County Sanitarian | Sealed Vault Latrine Permit |
| U.S. Army Corps of Engineers | 404 Fill Permit in Waters of the U.S. |
| Department of Environmental Quality | 318 Short-Term Water Quality Turbidity Related to Construction |
| Deer Lodge County Floodplain Coordinator | Zone D: not a designated floodplain no permit needed |

- (b) **Funding:**

| <u>Agency Name</u> | <u>Funding Amount</u> |
|---|-----------------------|
| MFWP Fishing Access Site Protection Account | \$10,000 |
| MFWP Boat-in-Lieu of Tax Account Funds | \$30,000 |
| Total | \$40,000 |

(c) Other Overlapping or Additional Jurisdictional Responsibilities:

| <u>Agency Name</u> | <u>Type of Responsibility</u> |
|---|---------------------------------------|
| State Historic Preservation Office | cultural site protection |
| U.S. Fish & Wildlife Service | funding approval |
| U.S. Forest Service - Anaconda Job Corps | project feasibility & work completion |
| Montana Department of Transportation | highway sign approval |
| Deer Lodge County | county road sign approval |

9. Narrative summary of the proposed action or project including the benefits and purpose of the proposed action:

The proposed action would allow continued day use and camping at the Stuart Mill Bay Fishing Access, but "harden" the site in an effort to limit off-road travel and further resource damage resulting from recurring, unrestricted use. The components proposed below would continue to allow a more primitive recreational experience than that offered at several other public sites around Georgetown Lake.

Land around Georgetown is quickly being developed; thus, public access is diminishing. In 1999, a local citizens group was formed to look at ways to protect the last undeveloped area of the lake. The Conservation Fund and this citizens group negotiated the purchase of 328 acres, known as Stuart Mill Bay from Denny Washington. The land was purchased through a grant from the Natural Resource Damage Program, then transferred to MFWP in 2003 for the purpose of protecting the tract for fish and wildlife habitat, scenic views, public recreation and public access.

The proposed level of development would be consistent with the intentions of The Conservation Fund and the desires of the public as conveyed to MFWP during a public meeting held at the site in October 2003, and in Anaconda on April 21, 2004. Site improvements as proposed would be completed by the Anaconda Job Corps managed by the Forest Service.

According to records kept by the Anaconda Search and Rescue group who has managed the site for many years, about 90 percent of the campers at Stuart Mill Bay are from Montana; 50 percent of the total campers are from the Butte or Anaconda area.

Georgetown Lake is highly popular in the state and region for anglers. MFWP Statewide Angler Pressure Estimates for 2001 indicate that 51,440 anglers use the lake annually, the third highest fished lake in Region 2 and ninth in the state. Anglers use non-motorized or motorized craft to access the lake, or fish from shore.

Roads and Parking and Trails

It is proposed to use existing two-track pioneered roads as the base for improving roads within the site. Roads would be widened to about 22' to allow two-way-traffic. All surfaces would be graveled. Road edges would be ditched or similarly designed to limit off road use and provide drainage. These roads would be located outside of wetlands and major riparian areas. Two-track roads not improved would be blocked and reclaimed. A gate would be installed near the entrance to appropriately manage the site as needed, such as extreme wet periods when roads and resources could be more easily damaged .

The road would be widened near the County Road to allow for plowing and parking of a few vehicles during winter months. A gravel road and cul-de-sac with parking for about a dozen vehicles, some with trailers, would be provided about 450' from the entrance to allow for day-use. The road system would include a loop at the north half of the site and a road ending with a cul-de-sac along the southwest shore. A cul-de-sac and parking for about 10 vehicles with trailers would be provided at the northern point for boating access.

An existing two-track road that parallels the county road on the south end of the peninsula would be barricaded to allow foot traffic only between the south western cul-de-sac and the day use area (see Concept Site Plan)

Boat Access

The area currently used to launch small motor boats is proposed for improvements at the north end of the peninsula. Fabric barrier and gravel would be laid to provide a single-width boat ramp for small motor boats. Due to the topography and shallow water depths of this site, large boats would have to use other access sites around the lake to launch. Signs would be posted to notify the public of these conditions at the FAS entrance and at the boat ramp. Gravel is considered the most appropriate surface material due to the ice action on this end of the lake.

A carry-in lake access would continue to be used along the south east side of the peninsula. An existing track about 12' wide to the lake shore would be covered with fabric barrier and gravel to provide an even surface for carrying float tubes, kayaks, canoes or similar vessels to the water. Barriers along the cul-de-sac parking area and about 100 feet from the water's edge would block vehicles from accessing the water.



Above: Boat ramp area at north end of point proposed for use by small motor boats. Photo by Terry Campbell May 2004.



Left: Carry-in lake access currently used and proposed for improvement on south east side of peninsula. Photo by Sue Dalbey, April 2004.

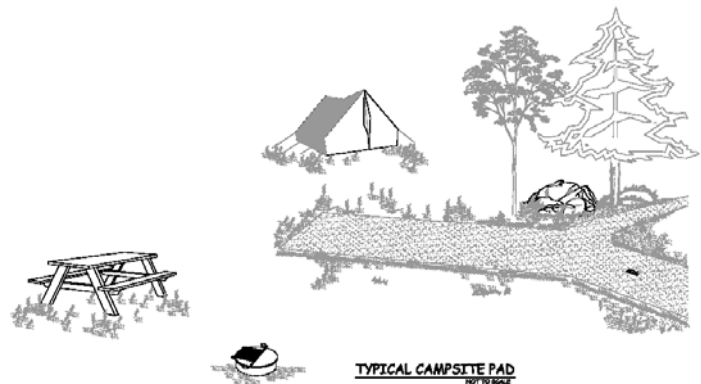
Camping Facilities

Camping unit capacity within the FAS is proposed to be similar to traditional use based on resource evidence (campfire rings and vegetation degradation) and local anecdotal knowledge of the site. Camp spurs (see drawing next page) would be located along the lake-side of the roads, but outside of the riparian zone to provide a buffer zone along the lake shore. Some traditional camp sites close to the lakeshore may be eliminated due to this intended buffer zone, which would allow continuous lakeshore access for anglers and pedestrians, and protect the fragile shoreline from vehicle effects. One or two small group use areas are proposed on the northeast side of the peninsula.

Sites would be leveled and graveled to accommodate vehicles with tent units or those towing trailers. Numbered posts, picnic tables and metal fire rings would designate sites. Rock or other barriers would not be installed unless vehicles persist in traveling off established roads.

A camp host site would be designated in the FAS. At this time, no utilities would be provided. This site would be occupied by the Anaconda Search and Rescue designee(s) or other host assigned by MFWP who would help manage the site, maintain facilities and collect camping fees.

Three or four concrete, sealed vault latrines with aggregate exterior surface (standard MFWP FAS latrine) would be installed in the FAS according to anticipated visitor densities.



MFWP drawing.

Site Management Issues

The site would have a "pack-in/pack-out" **garbage** policy consistent with other FASs across the state. This would also limit the potential for bear-human interactions at the site.

Winter use and parking needs would be observed in upcoming years. Plowing is not typically conducted on MFWP sites due to expense and low winter visitation. Roads near the site entrance, however, were designed to allow for possible winter access.

Signs would be posted along Highway 1 and along Denton's Point county road to direct visitors to the site. Signs within the site would identify day use areas, group use camping areas, fee collection regulations, trail access and boating access.

PART II. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW

1. Description and analysis of reasonable alternatives (including the no action alternative) to the proposed action whenever alternatives are reasonably available and prudent to consider and a discussion of how the alternatives would be implemented:

Under each category below, Alternative A describes the positive or negative impacts if no action occurs at the Stuart Mill Bay FAS. Preferred Alternative B under each category describes the impacts of the proposed action described in more detail above. Other alternatives and their associated impacts listed under each category are a result of designs or actions raised by the public and considered during the planning process.

A more detailed evaluation of impacts from the Proposed Action is included in *Part IV. Environmental Review Checklist* beginning on page 14.

Roads and Parking and Trails

Alternative A: No Action

If no action is taken, the vehicles could travel anywhere within Stuart Mill Bay FAS with no restrictions. The site is covered with many two-track roads around the perimeter of the peninsula, at the water's edge, within the riparian zone, through wetlands and across upper grasslands. Anecdotal sources indicate that OHVs use the site in conjunction with camping activities. Use is expected to increase slightly due to the signing of the site and recognition as a public site. With no restrictions on vehicle travel, existing roads would become wider, trenches deeper, and more tracks made across the site.

According to a local United States Forest Service (USFS) vegetation surveyor, it is highly likely that certain plant species considered sensitive under the USFS designation exist in a nearly native state within the FAS. Continued or increased off-road traffic in the area would negatively impact riparian, wetlands and upper grasslands species.

Preferred Alternative B: Proposed Action - small loop at north end of peninsula with spur to south to access western shore campsites.

The proposed action would limit vehicles to designated and improved roads. Widening the existing roads and providing adequate parking areas as designed would eliminate vegetative species in these immediate areas. However, the remaining two-track roads that will not be utilized for construction, will be reclaimed. By eliminating these two-track roads and prohibiting vehicles in these sensitive areas, native grasslands, wetland and riparian species can flourish.

Parking would be more efficient with directed travel and areas designed for vehicles with and without trailers. Trails are often sought by campers and would help diversify use at the FAS; use of existing two-track roads will limit resource impacts.

The proposed road design would help separate day-use and related traffic from many camping units. This design also makes use of the currently most heavily used roads within the FAS, allowing the roads receiving less traffic to be reclaimed or be used as trails.

Note: a more detailed evaluation of the Proposed Action is included in Part IV. Environmental Review Checklist beginning on page 14.

Alternative C: One large loop road around the perimeter of the FAS.

This alternative was originally considered for the site, but after public discussion in Anaconda, was modified to the preferred alternative. Total road distance would be similar to the proposed road routes. This could be one-way or two-way traffic. The heavily used road across the center of the site would be reclaimed under Alternative C.

Impacts to vegetation would be very similar to the preferred alternative since roads already exist in areas proposed for improved roads.

The south side of the loop, parallel to the county road currently gets little traffic according to local sources familiar with the site, and therefore presumed not to be critical for most users to access the site. Much of the traffic would pass camper units causing dust and noise. If the road was only about 16' wide to provide for one-way traffic only, traffic would likely travel at lower speeds, which would reduce speed and dust. Long pull-outs would be necessary periodically to allow for passing of vehicles which travel the wrong way.

Alternative D: One main access road through center of FAS ending in a "T" at the west shore to access the north and south ends.

This alternative would slightly reduce road construction costs due to the slightly shorter road length. Existing roads would be used to complete this alternative, but this alternative would also slightly reduce impacts to the vegetation. Traffic would be greater on the main road than if a loop system is provided. A looping road is more convenient for vehicles hauling long recreational trailers.

Alternative E: Pave roads, parking areas and campsites.

This alternative was not considered in detail for several reasons. This alternative was not publicly supported. Fishing Access Sites across the state are not typically paved. This alternative would be too expensive to be considered at this time.

Boat Access

Alternative A: No Action

If no action is taken, small boats could continue to launch and access the lake in many places, disturbing the riparian and wetland vegetation along much of the shoreline.

Preferred Alternative B: Proposed Action - Gravel north boat ramp and carry-in lake access in day-use area.

The proposed action would improve the north motorboat launching area with construction fabric and gravel to create a solid base from which to operate a vehicle. The proximity of the north ramp to Stuart Mill Bay and the fisheries nearby make this an ideal location and is currently a highly used site for launching small motorized boats. Large boats would not be able to launch from this site due to the shallow water. Several other public ramps are available on Georgetown Lake to provide launching facilities needed for larger boats.

The proposed carry-in ramp is currently used in this way because of its location within Stuart Mill Bay. It is close to shallow wetland sanctuaries and fishing opportunities ideal for non-motorized boating. Float tubes are often used to access the bay from this site. Blocking this ramp from vehicles would prevent further resource damage adjacent to the lake and would be in keeping with Best Management Practices to reduce sediment delivery to the lake. Graveled parking areas would limit resource damage to the designated area.

Gravel is the preferred material for both ramps due to its low maintenance costs and ability to roll with winter ice action. Concrete logs and cable mat materials were also considered, but these would be expected to roll up and/or crack under the ice pressures. Since the existing topography and water depths will only allow small boats to launch, a stout concrete ramp is not necessary to handle weights associated with larger boats. MFWP Design and Construction Engineers consider the existing base solid enough to support a gravel ramp.

Alternative C: Pour concrete on north boat ramp; gravel carry-in lake access.

This alternative would provide a concrete north boat ramp on the northern end of the point and a gravel carry-in lake access in the day-use area. Concrete is more expensive to install and repair than the proposed gravel ramp. It is also believed that a concrete ramp would not withstand the ice action.

Alternative D: Improve only one gravel ramp.

Under Alternative D, only one boat ramp would be improved. Currently, the northern point is most heavily used by small motorboat users and the south eastern ramp used primarily by people launching non-motorized craft, such as: float tubes, canoes, kayaks, row boats, and drift boats. The water far into Stuart Mill Bay is shallow and filled with vegetation not conducive to motorized boats. Topography and water depths are not as conducive for launching as the northern point currently most heavily used by motorboaters. The south eastern location is protected from prevailing winds, thus it is attractive for using small human-powered crafts. If motorized craft users wish, it is not far around the point to access the bay.

Sharing one ramp for both motorized and non-motorized boating could create user conflicts. In addition, if motorized craft use the south eastern ramp, there is more likelihood of disturbing wildlife, such as: moose, various small mammals, a large variety of waterfowl and songbirds.

Camping Facilities

Alternative A: No Action - random camping continues.

If no action is taken, the existing campsites would remain and more would be created over time. With added recognition of this site as a public land, more visitors would camp here each year. When existing popular sites are full, people would travel off roads to find their own camp site. The shore line riparian and wetland vegetations would be negatively impacted by expanding use close to shore.

Preferred Alternative B: Proposed Action - designate gravel camp pads with number posts, picnic tables, and fire rings.

The proposed action would designate camp sites adjacent to the main road and 100' or more from the shoreline. Sites would be located in traditionally used areas based on evidence of past use. Most campers would use facilities if provided, thus limiting travel and impacts on area vegetation. Installing number posts, tables, and fire rings helps to identify sites and provides amenities that many campers want and would make an effort to camp near.

Use would be concentrated in these "hardened" areas to allow reclamation of other areas. Gravel pads allow for a more primitive recreational experience than offered at several of the USFS paved campgrounds around Georgetown Lake. Also, in an effort to provide a more primitive or rural experience, the FAS would have a capacity similar to the number of sites currently used. Road barriers and camp site barriers would not be used unless off road traffic prevails.

One or two group use areas would be designated along the eastern side of the peninsula to allow continued traditional group use, but still provide a topographic and vegetative buffer from single sites on the western side.

Alternative C: Less developed camp sites - no level gravel camp pad; install numbered site posts, picnic tables and fire rings to identify sites.

This alternative would be less restrictive to campers allowing parking anywhere within the vicinity of the numbered post, picnic table and fire rings. Often these areas are not level, causing holes to be dug to level recreational vehicles. Vehicle travel is less confined, thus a larger volume of vegetation is compacted or disturbed. Use would likely continue near the water, continuing impacts to the riparian and wetland vegetation.

This would allow continuation of primitive recreation more similar to traditional use on the peninsula.

Site Management Issues

Alternative A: No Action - Winter use not allowed

If no action is taken, winter use would not be allowed. The roads would not be designed or constructed to provide off road parking for winter recreational use.

Preferred Alternative B: Proposed Action

The proposed action would design roads near the county road to allow for plowing and off road parking if needed and affordable in the future. Due to the current cost of plowing and overall state practice to not plow FASs, providing winter access is not a priority of this project. The project design would allow for increased winter opportunities in the future if needed and if operational funds were available.

Alternative C: Provide and actively manage the site for winter activities.

This alternative would design the entire day use area to accommodate large volumes of plowed snow and vehicle with trailer parking. Winter anglers could access the lake at the

carry-in lake access and recreationists could access the 60 acres on the peninsula or the larger lake area.

This alternative was not the preferred alternative because the expense of regular plowing is not provided in the FAS budgets.

2. Evaluation and listing of mitigation, stipulation, or other control measures enforceable by the agency or another government agency.

The site improvements are designed following MFWP Best Management Practices developed to control drainage, traffic patterns and protect resources. MFWP engineering staff would oversee the completion of the project to ensure construction meets state specifications, such as limiting soil and vegetation disturbance to the immediate project area, and seeding disturbed areas to aid in reclamation. MFWP designed the project to maintain vegetation for riparian wildlife habitat and yet provide a stable ramp and efficient use. Existing roads and areas disturbed by construction would be reclaimed.

The Deer Lodge County Sanitarian must approve installation of the sealed vault latrines.

The project would be monitored by MFWP Design and Construction engineers.

Noxious weeds would be monitored by MFWP after completion and controlled in accordance with methods outlined in the Region 2 Weed Management Plan and the Deer Lodge County Weed Board.

PART III. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

1. Describe the level of public involvement for this project if any, and, given the complexity and the seriousness of the environmental issues associated with the proposed action, is the level of public involvement appropriate under the circumstances?

Many community partners met on the site in October 2003 to review the site features and discuss issues. A preliminary site plan was drawn-up based on these conversations and presented the next spring in Anaconda.

About 27 people attended a public meeting in Anaconda on April 21, 2004, to discuss the proposed development and various options. The public was notified of this meeting through publication in the Anaconda Leader, 250 direct postcard mailings generated by the Natural Resource Damage Program and the standard Region 2 MFWP list of interested individuals.

The public will be notified in the following ways to comment on the EA.

- Two legal notices in each of these papers: *Anaconda Leader*, *Montana Standard* (Butte), *Phillipsburg Mail*, *Missoulian*, and the *Helena Independent Record*;
- One statewide press release;
- Public notice on the Fish, Wildlife & Parks web page:
<http://fwp.state.mt.us/publicnotices/default.aspx>
- direct mailing to interested parties involved in past meetings or who wish to be notified of MFWP projects.

This level of public notice and participation is appropriate for a project of this scope, which is based on a high level of public input and has few minor impacts, many of which can be mitigated.

2. Duration of comment period, if any.

The public comment period will extend for thirty (30) days following the publication of the second legal notice in area newspapers. Written comments will be accepted until 5:00 p.m., July 20, 2004, and can be mailed to the address below:

Stuart Mill Bay Draft EA
3201 Spurgin Road
Missoula, MT 59804

Or e-mailed to: *lbastian@state.mt.us*

PART IV. ENVIRONMENTAL REVIEW CHECKLIST

Evaluation of the impacts of the Proposed Action including secondary and cumulative impacts on the Physical and Human Environment.

A. PHYSICAL ENVIRONMENT

| 1. <u>LAND RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|---------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. **Soil instability or changes in geologic substructure? | | X | | | | 1a. |
| b. Disruption, displacement, erosion, compaction, moisture loss, or over-covering of soil, which would reduce productivity or fertility? | | | X | | yes | 1b. |
| c. **Destruction, covering or modification of any unique geologic or physical features? | | X | | | | 1c. |
| d. Changes in siltation, deposition or erosion patterns that may modify the channel of a river or stream or the bed or shore of a lake? | | X | | | | 1d. |
| e. Exposure of people or property to earthquakes, landslides, ground failure, or other natural hazard? | | X | | | | |
| f. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

1a. The proposed new gravel road, parking area and boat ramp would not cause additional soil instability. These actions would be surface alterations, and would not alter the geologic substructure. The proposed boat ramp site has been heavily used in the past and is of a solid gravelly composition that upholds heavy traffic. The design of the gravel boat ramp would be consistent with the existing shoreline so-as not to cause shoreline erosion.

1b. This site has traditionally been used for dispersed recreation, before MFWP acquired the site in 2003. The improvements of two-track roads, camping spurs and parking areas would result in disruption, compaction and gravel covering about 3-5 acres of existing roads, adjacent grasslands and riparian areas. Construction equipment and ground disturbance would be limited to the immediate area as per standard MFWP contract agreements; all disturbed areas adjacent to the facilities would be seeded with a local grass mix. The impacts to soil productivity and fertility would be mitigated by the intentional use of existing roads and previously disturbed areas, which are not highly productive, now.

1c. Unique geologic or physical features are not present within the construction area.

1d. Adding construction fabric and gravel to the existing north boat ramp area and south east carry-in lake access would be the only shoreline modifications in this project. About six inches of the lakebed and approach soils would be removed and replaced with fabric and a course crushed rock material to stabilize the ramp areas. The new ramp will be set at the same grade as the existing lake bottom. The ramp sites were chosen and the proposed action designed by the MFWP Design and Construction Engineering staff and reviewed by the

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

local Fisheries Biologist, and are not expected to significantly modify the lake shore or create additional erosion or deposition. These sites have been historically used by small motor boaters and small craft users. Shoreline erosion should slightly decrease by eliminating dispersed or unrestricted lake access by boaters, blocking vehicles at the carry-in lake access, and moving camp sites away from the lake shore.

| 2. <u>AIR</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|---------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. **Emission of air pollutants or deterioration of ambient air quality? (Also see 13 (c).) | | | X | | yes | 2a. |
| b. Creation of objectionable odors? | | X | | | | |
| c. Alteration of air movement, moisture, or temperature patterns or any change in climate, either locally or regionally? | | X | | | | |
| d. Adverse effects on vegetation, including crops, due to increased emissions of pollutants? | | X | | | | |
| e. ***For P-R/D-J projects, will the project result in any discharge, which will conflict with federal or state air quality regs? (Also see 2a.) | | X | | | | |
| f. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Air Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

2a. Minor and temporary amounts of dust are anticipated due to construction of roads and parking areas. Gravel roads may produce more dust near camp sites. Removal of vegetation surrounding the project would be minimized to limit dust. Areas around the new facilities that are disturbed by construction would be seeded after project completion to reduce future dust. Reclamation of the many roads across the site would decrease dust from current conditions.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

| 3. <u>WATER</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated* | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|------------|-------------------------|--------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. *Discharge into surface water or any alteration of surface water quality including but not limited to temperature, dissolved oxygen or turbidity? | | | X | | yes | 3a. |
| b. Changes in drainage patterns or the rate and amount of surface runoff? | | | X | | yes | 3b. |
| c. Alteration of the course or magnitude of floodwater or other flows? | | X | | | | 3c. |
| d. Changes in the amount of surface water in any water body or creation of a new water body? | | X | | | | |
| e. Exposure of people or property to water related hazards such as flooding? | | | X | | yes | 3e. |
| f. Changes in the quality of groundwater? | | X | | | | |
| g. Changes in the quantity of groundwater? | | X | | | | |
| h. Increase in risk of contamination of surface or groundwater? | | | X positive | | | 3h. |
| i. Effects on any existing water right or reservation? | | X | | | | |
| j. Effects on other water users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quality? | | X | | | | |
| k. Effects on other users as a result of any alteration in surface or groundwater quantity? | | X | | | | |
| l. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect a designated floodplain? (Also see 3c.) | | X | | | | Please refer to comment 3c. |
| m. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project result in any discharge that will affect federal or state water quality regulations? (Also see 3a.) | | X | | | | |
| n. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Water Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

3a. The alteration of the lake shore to improve two boat ramps would cause minor and temporary increases to turbidity levels. Equipment would not enter the water. Best Management Practices used during construction would limit other impacts to surface water quality. Seeding and revegetation of disturbed areas after construction would limit future turbidity caused by erosion. Dissolved oxygen and temperature levels are not expected to be notably impacted.

3b. Drainage volumes and rate would slightly increase from removing vegetation to construct roads and parking areas and covering these areas with gravel. These impacts would be limited by the use of Best Management Practices (BMPs), for which MFWP is a lead agency in developing and implementing. The use of gravel surfaces

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

and BMP grading would preclude large amounts of runoff. Surrounding vegetation and thick riparian vegetation along the shoreline would help disperse runoff prior to reaching Georgetown Lake.

3c. Mike Kahoe, Deer Lodge County Floodplain Administrative Assistant, confirmed to Sue Dalbey (April 29, 2004) that the Stuart Mill Bay FAS is in a Zone D, or an undetermined/unmapped area; therefore flooding hazards have not been determined. This is an undesignated floodplain. The proposed project has an overall low profile, which is unlikely to alter floodwaters, though unlikely to occur on a controlled reservoir such as Georgetown Lake. Deer Lodge County owns the dam and regulates Georgetown Lake water levels based on available water inflows and downstream irrigation and homeowner demands.

3e. Large boats that displace a lot of water cannot currently launch at the site due to shallow water depths, nor would these conditions change with installation of a gravel ramp. The FAS entrance and boat ramp area would be signed to alert boaters to this condition.

3h. Moving camp sites away from the lake shore and limiting the number of launching sites would decrease the risks of contaminating lake water with petroleum substances.

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** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

| 4. VEGETATION Will the proposed action result in? | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|-------------------|----------------------------|------------------------------------|------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Changes in the diversity, productivity or abundance of plant species (including trees, shrubs, grass, crops, and aquatic plants)? | | | X | | yes | 4a. |
| b. Alteration of a plant community? | | X | | | | |
| c. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species? | | | X | | yes | 4c. |
| d. Reduction in acreage or productivity of any agricultural land? | | X | | | | |
| e. Establishment or spread of noxious weeds? | | | X | | yes | 4e. |
| f. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect wetlands, or prime and unique farmland? | | | X positiv e | | | 4f. |
| g. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Vegetation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

4a. The FAS consists largely of open upper grassland and cinquefoil with thick riparian habitat dominated by willows along the perimeter of the peninsula. Lodgepole pines are scattered at the southern end of the property along the county road where elevation begins to rise. Approximately 3-5 acres of land would be altered to complete the proposed project. The approximately 1 mile of roads would follow existing routes established by public use. The existing roads would be doubled in width to allow safe two-way passage by vehicles with trailers and recreational vehicles; therefore, some upper grasslands would be converted into gravel road, as well as parking areas. Camping sites would be moved farther from the lake shore to protect riparian vegetation, but would alter upper grassland vegetation. The gravel camp pads would be placed in areas which have received concentrated use in the past and where vegetation is no longer pristine.

Much of this land proposed for construction has already been highly altered by past vehicle use and concentrated camping or boat launching use. The project location and road routes were selected in an effort to retain larger vegetation and limit impacts where possible. MFWP contracts require construction to be contained to the immediate area, thus limiting the impacts on surrounding vegetation. By designating specific routes, the remaining pioneered roads criss-crossing the site through wetlands, riparian and upper grasslands would be reclaimed and vegetation would not be disturbed by off-road traffic.

4b. Eliminating access to pioneered roads throughout the site and seeding these areas, would allow portions of wetland, riparian and upper grassland communities to revegetate. The improved roads, boat ramps, parking areas and camping sites would be located in areas already impacted by past use.

4c. The Montana Natural Heritage Program searched their database for plant species of special concern and indicates no known occurrences of federally listed threatened, endangered, or proposed threatened or endangered plant species in the Stuart Mill Bay area.

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** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

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Their search did identify one species in the proximity of the FAS, the straightbeak buttercup (*Ranunculus orthorhynchus*), which is considered a sensitive species by the USFS (written communication April 20, 2003). Forest Service sensitive species are species for which the Regional Forester has determined there is a concern for population viability range-wide or in the region. This buttercup was recorded near here in 1966. This species inhabits moist meadows in the montane zone ranging in elevation from 3,543 to 8,464 feet above sea level.

Sue Dalbey discussed the project with Kathy Sweet, Sensitive Plant Coordinator for the Pintlar Ranger District within the Beaverhead-Deerlodge National Forest (personal communication April 26, 2004). Ms. Sweet is somewhat familiar with the FAS from personal use of the site and indicated that it offers an excellent piece of native grasslands areas including rough fescue and cinquefoil species in the upper areas which are less disturbed. The more highly visited areas of the FAS around the perimeter camping sites and boat launching areas include more introduced species such as blue grass; the native species are not as prevalent.

Ms. Sweet indicated that there is high likelihood that the peculiar moonwort (*Botrychium paradoxum*) and other moonwort species would occur on the Stuart Mill Bay FAS. These, too, are considered sensitive species by the USFS and have been found at other locations around Georgetown Lake with similar habitat. She supplied a list of additional USFS sensitive species that are known to inhabit the Georgetown Lake area or could potentially inhabit the Stuart Mill Bay FAS. Please see Appendix D to reference these species.

A formal plant survey has not been conducted on the site. MFWP has purposefully designed the proposed road system, camp spurs, parking areas, and boat ramps in areas currently experiencing high visitation and resource degradation. Though construction of wider roads and overcovering with gravel would eliminate vegetation adjacent to existing roads, the project would also reclaim the remaining multitude of two-track roads across the upper grasslands, riparian zones and wetland areas. Site regulations would prohibit traffic in all areas other than the newly designated gravel routes. This would be strongly enforced. Impacts to vegetation over the long term are expected to be equal to existing use impacts or slightly positive.

4e. Ms. Sweet noted that Canada thistle, spotted knapweed, and orange hawkweed occur on the site. Areas disturbed by construction would be prone to the establishment of noxious weeds. All disturbed areas would be seeded with a local grass mix immediately after construction to reduce the possibility of weeds becoming established. MFWP would monitor disturbed areas until adequate ground cover has returned and regularly thereafter. Weeds would be removed in accordance with the revised Region 2 Weed Management Plan and Deer Lodge County Weed Board, using mechanical, chemical or biological methods.

4f. Wetlands occur around the perimeter of the peninsula. These areas have been impacted by past unrestricted use and would be reclaimed by the proposed project. New roads, parking areas and camp sites would avoid these areas.

A review of the soil maps for the peninsula revealed five soil types: Tibson gravelly loam with 2-4 percent slopes, Tibson gravelly loam with 8-15 percent slopes, Finn loam with 0-4 percent slopes, Rumsey gravelly ashy silt loam with 8-15 percent slopes, and gravel pits. Sue Dalbey consulted with Neal Svendsen, Soil Scientist with USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service in Missoula (electronic communication, April 28, 2004) who stated that these soil map units "are all in a "cryic" (cold) soil temperature regime and would not be prime or unique." None of the listed map units are on the MT Prime and Important Farmlands database.

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| ** 5. FISH/WILDLIFE Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------------------------|--|-----------------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Deterioration of critical fish or wildlife habitat? | | X | | | | |
| b. Changes in the diversity or abundance of game animals or bird species? | | X | | | | |
| c. Changes in the diversity or abundance of nongame species? | | | X positive | | | 5c. |
| d. Introduction of new species into an area? | | X | | | | |
| e. Creation of a barrier to the migration or movement of animals? | | X | | | | |
| f. Adverse effects on any unique, rare, threatened, or endangered species? | | X | | | | 5f. |
| g. Increase in conditions that stress wildlife populations or limit abundance (including harassment, legal or illegal harvest or other human activity)? | | | X | | yes | 5g. |
| h. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project be performed in any area in which T&E species are present, and will the project affect any T&E species or their habitat? (Also see 5f.) | | X | | | | Please refer to comment 5f. |
| i. ***For P-R/D-J, will the project introduce or export any species not presently or historically occurring in the receiving location? (Also see 5d.) | | X | | | | |
| j. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Fish and Wildlife (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

MFWP Fisheries Biologist Wayne Hadley discussed the proposed project with Sue Dalbey on April 23, 2004. Georgetown Lake provides habitat for kokanee salmon, rainbow trout, brook trout, longnose suckers and reidside shiners. The proposed project would not have a significant impact on the fisheries, though due to the nearly eutrophic (deoxygenated) condition of Georgetown Lake, new nutrients are not desired in the lake. For this reason, it is important that roads and campsites are located about 100' from the shoreline and construction activities are monitored to limit sedimentation and erosion.

According to Mr. Hadley, the project would have implications to angler access. As the site becomes more popular and well known as a public site, bank and boat angler use would be expected to increase. In addition, many properties around the lake traditionally used for public access are being sold; thus, the demand for public shoreline access is expected to greatly increase.

The buffer zone between campers and the shoreline mentioned above would improve angler's ability to shore fish without intruding on other recreationists. Boat angling would likely increase with the improvements made to boat ramps and provision of stable parking areas. It would be important that boaters are made aware of the shallow water conditions at the northern boat ramp to reduce the risk of damaging a large boat. Mr. Hadley

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suggests posting signs at both the FAS entrance and at the boat ramp that the ramp is suitable for small, light craft only, and that other ramps are available on the lake for larger boat launching.

Stuart Mill Bay on Georgetown Lake is important for anglers using float tubes, canoes, kayaks, rowboats. This area is sheltered from the prevailing southwest winds and easier to fish. There are good numbers of fish in the bay and good insect populations. It is used by many fly-fishing anglers.

Ice fishing is popular on Georgetown Lake, also. Stuart Mill Bay is difficult to reach for ice fishing except by snowmobile due to the distance from current access points. Anglers would likely favor winter access at the Stuart Mill Bay FAS. However, due to budgeting constraints, winter access would remain as it has in the past.

MFWP Wildlife Biologist Ray Vinkey discussed the proposed project with Sue Dalbey on May 12, 2004. The site does provide good winter range for a variety of animals, which can be conserved with active weed management, minimizing human use and keeping vehicle speeds low. Pathways from campsites to the lake shore may increase, and therefore affect habitat in those areas.

The Stuart Mill Bay FAS and surrounding area provides habitat for white-tailed deer, mule deer, moose, black bear, songbirds, muskrat, reptiles and amphibians, many species of waterfowl and a variety of small mammals. Mink, skunks and raccoons likely inhabit the area and could be disturbed by visitor activity.

Willow and riparian habitat for songbirds, neotropical birds, reptiles and amphibians, and small mammals would be improved by moving campsites and roads farther from the shoreline.

5c. Some small nongame species would be displaced by construction of the new roads and camping pads. The creation of a buffer zone between the lakeshore and campsites, reclamation of old roads, and elimination of off road travel would improve upper grassland habitat, riparian zone and wetland habitats and reduce disturbance to related small species.

5f. A search of the Natural Heritage Program database revealed the lynx as the only federally threatened or endangered species in the Stuart Mill Bay vicinity. Due to the existing traffic in the site and on nearby county roads, current human use of the site and activity from nearby residences, it is unlikely that lynx use the FAS. The FAS area does not provide prime lynx habitat, according to Mr. Vinkey. Lynx tend to avoid open areas, of which the FAS is primarily open grass habitat with few lodge pole pines along the southern and eastern boundaries.

5g. Use of the site is expected to increase as public awareness increases regarding its availability for public access to the lake and recreational opportunities. The increased visitation, associated activity and noise would slightly increase the stress on wildlife populations. Use can be managed to a small degree by the limited number of camp sites and parking spaces provided and subsequently enforcing regulations that prohibit off road traffic/parking.

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*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

B. HUMAN ENVIRONMENT

| 6. <u>NOISE/ELECTRICAL EFFECTS</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Increases in existing noise levels? | | | X | | | 6a. |
| b. Exposure of people to severe or nuisance noise levels? | | X | | | | |
| c. Creation of electrostatic or electromagnetic effects that could be detrimental to human health or property? | | X | | | | |
| d. Interference with radio or television reception and operation? | | X | | | | |
| e. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Noise/Electrical Effects (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

6a. Noise levels would increase for about two months while equipment is used to complete the proposed construction of roads, camp pads, parking areas and install latrines. Overall noise levels of vehicles using the roads would slightly increase due to the slight increase in visitation as people become aware the site is open to public access.

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** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

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| 7. <u>LAND USE</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|---------------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Alteration of or interference with the productivity or profitability of the existing land use of an area? | | | X positive | | | 7a. |
| b. Conflicted with a designated natural area or area of unusual scientific or educational importance? | | X | | | | 7b. |
| c. Conflict with any existing land use whose presence would constrain or potentially prohibit the proposed action? | | X | | | | Please refer to comment 7b. |
| d. Adverse effects on or relocation of residences? | | X | | | | |
| e. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Land Use (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

7a. In general, the site would continue to provide the same recreational opportunities that have traditionally been available. The Anaconda Search and Rescue could continue through an agreement with MFWP to conduct some management activities including camp hosting and collecting camping fees.

7b. The Stuart Mill Bay FAS is part of a 368-acre acquisition from The Conservation Fund in 2003 in an effort to protect the resources, provide wildlife habitat and public recreational access. It was clear in the grass roots level of the conveyance process that there was no intention to provide a high level of development at this site due to the availability of that level of recreational opportunities at other locations around the lake. The proposed project complies with the objectives of that acquisition and intended management of the resources, while providing managed public access. Though this area is not designated an area of unusual scientific or educational importance, educational opportunities do exist through the interpretation of native plant species and the area ecology.

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** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

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| 8. <u>RISK/HEALTH HAZARDS</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|---|-----------|------|---------|-------------------------|---------------------------|-----------------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Risk of an explosion or release of hazardous substances (including, but not limited to oil, pesticides, chemicals, or radiation) in the event of an accident or other forms of disruption? | | | X | | yes | 8a. |
| b. Affect an existing emergency response or emergency evacuation plan, or create a need for a new plan? | | X | | | | |
| c. Creation of any human health hazard or potential hazard? | | X | | | | |
| d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any chemical toxicants be used? (Also see 8a) | | X | | | | Please refer to comment 8a. |
| e. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Risk/Health Hazards (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

8a. The MFWP Region 2 Weed Management Plan calls for an integrated approach to managing weeds, including the use of herbicides. The use of weed controlling chemicals would be in compliance with application guidelines and conducted by certified applicators to limit the possibility of a spill. Weeds would also be controlled using mechanical or biological means in certain areas to reduce the risk of chemical spills or water contamination.

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| 9. COMMUNITY IMPACT Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|--|-----------|------|---------------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Alteration of the location, distribution, density, or growth rate of the human population of an area? | | | X | | yes | 9a. |
| b. Alteration of the social structure of a community? | | X | | | | |
| c. Alteration of the level or distribution of employment or community or personal income? | | | X positive | | | 9c. |
| d. Changes in industrial or commercial activity? | | X | | | | |
| e. Increased traffic hazards or effects on existing transportation facilities or patterns of movement of people and goods? | | | X positive | | | 9e. |
| f. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Community Impact (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

9b. Total seasonal visitation is expected to slightly increase with the signage recently installed, proposed improved access, smooth roads, level camp pads, designated parking areas, latrines, and graveled boat launch areas. The number of camp sites and parking places proposed with this project are based on current use during busy weekends. It is anticipated that with the improved access and facilities, all sites would be used more often during the summer season. The season of use may also extend to earlier in the spring and later in the fall because of better road drainage and solid access. Visitation would be somewhat controlled due to the limited number of camping and parking slots.

9c. The Anaconda Search and Rescue has traditionally managed the site and collected camping fees. This arrangement would continue

9c. Traffic patterns would be safer if the roads are graveled and widened to allow two-way traffic. Delineated camp sites, parking areas and boat ramps would improve traffic flows. Vehicle hazards would be reduced with the construction of level, gravel camp pads for recreational vehicles to park and cul-de-sacs to allow easy turning around of vehicles with long trailers.

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| 10. <u>PUBLIC SERVICES/TAXES/UTILITIES</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|---|-----------|------|---------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Will the proposed action have an effect upon or result in a need for new or altered governmental services in any of the following areas: fire or police protection, schools, parks/recreational facilities, roads or other public maintenance, water supply, sewer or septic systems, solid waste disposal, health, or other governmental services? If any, specify: | | | X | | yes | 10a. |
| b. Will the proposed action have an effect upon the local or state tax base and revenues? | | X | | | | |
| c. Will the proposed action result in a need for new facilities or substantial alterations of any of the following utilities: electric power, natural gas, other fuel supply or distribution systems, or communications? | | X | | | | |
| d. Will the proposed action result in increased use of any energy source? | | X | | | | |
| e. **Define projected revenue sources | | | | | | 10e. |
| f. **Define projected maintenance costs. | | | | | | 10f. |
| g. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Public Services/Taxes/Utilities (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

10a. Improving the site with formal gravel roads, latrines and boat ramps would increase the state government services needed to maintain the site and facilities. Roads would require grading nearly every year. The northern boat ramp may need new gravel or regarding of existing gravel each spring due to ice action. Latrines would need annual pumping and regular cleaning and paper filling. Fire grates would need cleaning. Tables and signs would need repairing from vandalism. These are all typical activities at a FAS and some of these duties would be assigned to an MFWP caretaker or maintenance crews. MFWP-provided services would be slightly reduced by the cooperation of the Anaconda Search and Rescue who would help manage and collect fees at the site as a camp host.

10e. In the past, the Anaconda Search and Rescue collected \$4 per camping unit at the site during the summer season. In accordance with the Biennial Fee Rule, MFWP would charge camping fees after the proposed project is complete. Statewide fees are typically \$7 per camping unit per night if an occupant holds a Montana fishing license or \$12 if an occupant does not have a fishing license. Non-residents who purchase a two-day, 10-day, or full-season fishing license at any time within the current license year shall be considered license holders for the entire year for the purposes of this Rule. The Anaconda Search and Rescue would continue to collect camping fees at Stuart Mill Bay FAS operating under an agreement with MFWP.

10f. The Conservation Fund has committed to providing \$2,500 annually towards maintenance for the first two years of operation. After that, FWP would use Region 2 Fishing Access Site Maintenance Fund to cover costs annually for: boat ramp maintenance, road grading, latrine supplies and pumping, litter removal, caretaker travel and activities, miscellaneous vandalism repair, and weed control.

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- ** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).
- *** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.
- **** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

| ** 11. <u>AESTHETICS/RECREATION</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|---|------------------|-------------|----------------|------------------------------------|--|--------------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Alteration of any scenic vista or creation of an aesthetically offensive site or effect that is open to public view? | | | X | | yes | 11a. |
| b. Alteration of the aesthetic character of a community or neighborhood? | | X | | | | |
| c. **Alteration of the quality or quantity of recreational/tourism opportunities and settings? (Tourism Report included in Appendix E.) | | | X positive | | | 11c. |
| d. ***For P-R/D-J, will any designated or proposed wild or scenic rivers, trails or wilderness areas be impacted? | | X | | | | |
| e. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Aesthetics/Recreation (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

This site, though under private ownership until recent years, has traditionally been open for public recreation. Primitive camp sites are obvious along the entire lake shore as evidenced by rock fire circles and trampled vegetation from repeated use. Periodic breaks in the shoreline willows mark locations where people have repeatedly launched their small boats to fish or quietly paddle past wildlife common to the bay area. The FAS has open grass/brush vistas in the center with sparse lodge pole on the south end. The subtle elevation change nicely blocks activities of boat launching areas and vehicles entering the site from campers. Two main areas could be conducive to group use areas on the northeastern side of the peninsula.

11a. The area aesthetics viewed from within the site would change from a primitive atmosphere to a more rural feel with the construction of improved gravel roads and formal campsite designations. Road barriers are purposely being left out of the proposed project to mitigate the aesthetic changes. The typical FAS latrines have an aggregate surface to blend in with the natural surroundings. In addition, latrines would be deliberately placed among existing vegetation or available topography where a concrete latrine would more aesthetically acceptable. The site topography and vegetation aids in shielding the proposed improvements from people passing along the county road and neighbors.

11c. The proposed project would fill a more rural niche in the recreational spectrum of opportunities in the Georgetown Lake area. The FS operates several public camp grounds and boat ramps that are paved and provide a higher or more urban level of recreational experience. The demand for public access in this area precludes the ability to offer a more primitive recreational experience without jeopardizing the natural resources or providing a less than the traditional number of recreational opportunities (road access to far reaches of the site, fewer camping spaces and/or reduced boat launching areas). The quality and seasonal duration of access to this site would be improved by widening, grading and graveling the roads. Visitors with all sizes of recreational vehicles, including large motor homes or vehicles towing long trailers, would be able to easily access the campground, park, turn around and exit. The natural setting would be relatively retained by limiting the number of roads in the FAS and reclaiming the many pioneered two-track roads across the site.

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** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

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| 12. <u>CULTURAL/HISTORICAL RESOURCES</u> Will the proposed action result in: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|---|-----------|------|---------|-------------------------|---------------------------|---------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. **Destruction or alteration of any site, structure or object of prehistoric historic, or paleontological importance? | | X | | | | 12a. |
| b. Physical change that would affect unique cultural values? | | X | | | | |
| c. Effects on existing religious or sacred uses of a site or area? | | X | | | | |
| d. ****For P-R/D-J, will the project affect historic or cultural resources? Please refer to SHPO letter of clearance in Appendix F. (Also see comment 12a.) | | X | | | | |
| e. Other: | | X | | | | |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Cultural/Historical Resources (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

12a. A cultural resource specialist surveyed the site in May 2004 and found no cultural resources. MFWP submitted that report for State Historic Preservation Office (SHPO) consultation. Both agencies determined that there is a low likelihood of impact to cultural resources as a result of the proposed project.

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*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

SIGNIFICANCE CRITERIA

| 13. SUMMARY EVALUATION OF SIGNIFICANCE Will the proposed action, considered as a whole: | IMPACT * | | | | Can Impact Be Mitigated * | Comment Index |
|---|-----------|------|---------|----------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| | Unknown * | None | Minor * | Potentially Significant | | |
| a. Have impacts that are individually limited, but cumulatively considerable? (A project or program may result in impacts on two or more separate resources that create a significant effect when considered together or in total.) | | | X | | yes | 13a. |
| b. Involve potential risks or adverse effects, which are uncertain but extremely hazardous if they were to occur? | | X | | | | |
| c. Potentially conflict with the substantive requirements of any local, state, or federal law, regulation, standard or formal plan? | | X | | | | |
| d. Establish a precedent or likelihood that future actions with significant environmental impacts will be proposed? | | X | | | | |
| e. Generate substantial debate or controversy about the nature of the impacts that would be created? | | X | | | | |
| f. ***For P-R/D-J, is the project expected to have organized opposition or generate substantial public controversy? (Also see 13e.) | | X | | | | 13f. |
| g. ****For P-R/D-J, list any federal or state permits required. | | | | | | Please refer to 8(a) on page 4. |

Narrative Description and Evaluation of the Cumulative and Secondary Effects on Significance Criteria (attach additional pages of narrative if needed):

13a. Local campers and day use visitors to this site are accustomed to a primitive site with low numbers of visitors other than during popular weekend use and paying a nominal fee for overnight use. The improved roads, boat access, signs and camping facilities are expected to increase visitation on a more consistent level. In addition, the fee would rise from the traditional \$4 to a minimum of \$7 for overnight use. These combined changes in aesthetics and fees could cause a certain number of traditional visitors to no longer use this site. The impact of these actions may have been mitigated through involving the local public in deciding how the site should be improved to protect resources and notifying them at the public meeting of the increased fees.

13f. The proposed plan and alternatives were thoroughly discussed at a public meeting in Anaconda, April 21, 2004, when 27 members of the public attended representing a wide variety of interest groups, including local residents, The Conservation Fund, Georgetown Homeowners Association, Anaconda Search and Rescue, Butte Skyline Sportsmen, Anaconda Sportsmen, Trout Unlimited, and the Montana Natural Resource Damage Program. Many attendees expressed their concerns and preferences to specific development features. Most attendees agreed upon the goals of the project and no organized opposition or substantial public controversy is anticipated.

* Include a narrative explanation under Part III describing the scope and level of impact. If the impact is unknown, explain why the unknown impact has not or cannot be evaluated.

** Include a narrative description addressing the items identified in 12.8.604-1a (ARM).

*** Determine whether the described impact may result and respond on the checklist. Describe any minor or potentially significant impacts.

**** Include a discussion about the issue in the EA narrative and include documentation if it will be useful.

PART V. NARRATIVE EVALUATION AND COMMENT

This analysis did not reveal any significant impacts to the human or physical environment.

The project has been designed to limit development, but provide the recreational opportunities desired by the public and protect the resources from further degradation. The recreational opportunities of small craft boating, camping, hiking, bird watching, and angling traditionally enjoyed by the public would continue, but natural resources would be less impacted by unrestricted vehicle travel. The proposed project focuses on improving access in areas having been impacted by previous repeated use. The goal is to limit the recreational activities to the most popular areas and allow the remainder of the site to support wildlife and native plant growth, control erosion, and provide natural aesthetics.

Traffic flows would be safer, more efficient and less damaging to equipment if roads are wider, graded and graveled. Old roads would be blocked and reclaimed to allow regrowth.

The proposed project would alter the aesthetics of the site and create a more rural feel to the area, rather than a primitive, undeveloped atmosphere. The site would likely receive higher visitation due to the demand for public lake access and as the site becomes well-known for that access. If no action is taken to manage use, more pioneered roads would be created, more vegetation would be destroyed, and the area would become an overused, weed infested site.

Because of the reclamation proposed to the many existing routes across the site, the proposed road widening, parking areas and camp spur improvements are not considered a significant impact to the aesthetics of the site or the neighborhood.

PART VI. EA PREPARATION

- 1. Based on the significance criteria evaluated in this EA, is an EIS required? (YES/NO)?**

If an EIS is not required, explain why the EA is the appropriate level of analysis for this proposed action.

Based on an evaluation of impacts to the physical and human environment under MEPA, this environmental review revealed no significant negative impacts from the proposed action; therefore, an EIS is not necessary and an environmental assessment is the appropriate level of analysis.

2. Name, title, address and phone number of the person(s) responsible for preparing the EA:

| | | |
|------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|
| Sue Dalbey | Lee Bastian | Allan Kuser |
| Independent Contractor | Region 2 State Parks Manager | Fishing Access Site Coordinator |
| Dalbey Resources | MFWP | MFWP |
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| Helena, MT 59601 | Missoula, MT 59804 | Helena, MT 59620-0701 |
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3. List of agencies consulted during preparation of the EA:

Montana Fish, Wildlife & Parks
Parks Division
Wildlife Division
Fisheries Division
Design & Construction Bureau
Montana Natural Heritage Program
Montana Department of Natural Resources and Conservation (floodplains)
Deer Lodge County Floodplain Administrator
USDA Natural Resources Conservation Service (soils)
USDA Forest Service (vegetation)

APPENDICES (separate file if viewing this document electronically)

- A. Stuart Mill Bay Location Map
- B. Site Plan
- C. MCA 23-1-110 Project Qualification Checklist
- D. Sensitive Vegetation in the Georgetown Lake Area
- E. Tourism Report – Montana Department of Commerce
- F. Clearance Letter – State Historic Preservation Office